

Memorandum



Date: August 27, 2004

To: George M. Burgess
County Manager

From: Vivian Donnell Rodriguez
Director, Park and Recreation Department

Subject: Implementation of a Quality Control Program at County Parks, replacement of chain link fencing with two-rail wood fencing at County Parks and a report on the feasibility of funding various improvements at Miami Metrozoo.

The Department has been asked to respond to three separate requests that have been received related to funding in fiscal year 2004-2005. Two of the requests are from Commissioner Souto: implementation of a Quality Control Program and replacement of chain link fencing with two-rail wood fencing at County parks. The third request is a request by Mayor Penelas concerning the feasibility of funding various projects related to the Tropical America exhibit to be developed at Miami Metrozoo.

Quality Control Program

The Quality Control Program proposed by Commissioner Souto would include regular inspections of regional and neighborhood parks; training of park supervisors to ensure high-level of quality control at the parks; improvements to the overall maintenance of restrooms with emphasis during peak operating hours (weekends and holidays); use of a bathroom inspection checklist; implementation of a method for the public to provide comments and suggestions such as suggestion boxes and posting of park office phone numbers; and sufficient funding in the department's 2004-2005 budget allocation for the proper maintenance of all neighborhood, district, and regional parks including additional custodial and maintenance staff.

The Department currently has in place standards of performance for many of the service delivery functions including maintenance of facilities. These standards are continually under review to insure best business practices and achieve desired levels of maintenance within approved funding levels. The current standards for the maintenance of public restrooms were adopted in May 2001 and are currently being modified. The revised standards, including process, cleaning products, and equipment, will be part of custodial training sessions to begin in October. Landscape maintenance training sessions are scheduled to begin in January 2005.

Based on the established standards of performance, Department staff evaluates the quality of maintenance at its facilities from the customer's point of view at various times throughout the year. Staffed facilities are inspected daily by park managers. Staffed and unstaffed facilities are inspected weekly by service area managers and monthly by region managers. On a semi-annual basis, the Director and Assistant Director for Operations inspect all staffed and active facilities. The semi-annual inspection is referred to as a "Sparkle Tour" and facilities are rated on all aspects of its operation and service to the public. Scores range from a level 1 which is optimum or "Disney" quality level to a level 5 which is given to unmaintained or undeveloped park properties.

The evaluation process also takes into account and follows up on any customer complaints or suggestions that are received at the park facility or that may have been received at the Department's administrative offices. Suggestion boxes are located at all park offices. In addition, the Department proposes to post at all park restrooms the phone number for the administrative offices.

To provide and maintain the Quality Control Program as recommended by Commissioner Souto, the Department estimates it will need additional resources for the following:

Daily inspections for all parks	\$ 531,000
Custodial roving crew for neighborhood and Community Parks	\$ 472,000
Custodial workers for metropolitan parks	\$ 835,000
Increased grounds maintenance in neighborhood parks	\$ 790,000
Infrastructure repairs/improvements	\$1,337,000
Total Funds Needed – First Year	\$3,965,000

The amount of \$3.965 million includes \$906,000 in start up costs for the purchase of the equipment needed. The recurring operating expense is approximately \$3.06 million and projected to increase on an annual basis by the uncontrollable costs related to personnel.

Two-Rail Wood Fencing

This request proposes to replace all chain link fencing at all County parks, as funding allows, with two-rail wood fencing except where the chain link fencing is necessary for operational or storage reasons. Department staff will conduct an inventory of park facilities, prepare a summary of their findings, provide an explanation for those facilities where the two-rail wood fencing is not a feasible option, and prepare a cost estimate for those facilities where the chain link fencing would be replaced. The Department requests 90 days to prepare this information.

Tropical America Exhibit

The request from the Zoological Society of Florida (ZSF) is related to the development of the new Tropical America exhibit at Miami Metrozoo. As you know, the ZSF, in partnership with Miami-Dade County, will be funding the development of this new exhibit. In a memorandum to Mayor Penelas, the Zoological Society requested funding allocations in the 2004-2005 budget for expenses that are needed to ensure the success of this project:

Purchase and install specimen trees---\$766,000

Trees will need to have adequate on-site growing time prior to the projected exhibit opening in 2007. Having these large trees is critical to achieving the "immerse effect" and to having shade cover for both the animals and our visitors.

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Construction of Bird Holding Facilities---\$649,000

These facilities will consist of 25 large bird-holding stalls with covered walkways, plumbing and electrical installations and some pools. As we begin to acquire the many exotic birds planned for the exhibit, we must have adequate containment facilities. Many of these birds will arrive at various times between now and the opening of the exhibit in 2007.

Refurbishment of Existing Animal Holding Facilities---\$344,000

The existing quarantine building must be refurbished and reconfigured to support the new exhibit and provide new containment areas for new animals and new workspaces for the zookeepers. Miami Metrozoo must be in a position to acquire the new animals as they become available. Oftentimes, there may be only one opportunity to acquire a given species, so it is critically important that we provide the proper containment facilities at the Metrozoo.

The Department does not have the \$1.76 million in funding being requested. It is possible to include this funding need as part of the Building Better Communities Bond Program (GOB). However, in covering these costs, the number of work elements that would have been covered by the GOB funds will have to be reduced. In the event the GOB is not approved in November 2004, the Department will work with OSBM to explore alternate capital funding.

Cc: Alina Tejeda Hudak, Assistant County Manager
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